

**SUMMARY OF THE
TRANSITION COMMITTEE MEETING
MAY 18, 2000**

The Transition Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on Thursday, May 18, 2000 at 4 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).

The meeting was led by the committee's committee co-chairs, Ms. Carol Batterton of the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) and Dr. Charles Brokopp of the Utah Department of Health. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the issues contained on the committee's agenda.

AGENDA ITEMS

Review and Agenda and Approval of Minutes from the April 20, 2000 Meeting

Dr. Brokopp opened the meeting by reviewing the agenda items planned for discussion. Those items, and the related discussion points on each, are detailed below. He then asked for corrections or additions to the draft minutes of the April 20, 2000 meeting of the committee. One grammatical error (one-word addition in fourth line under "Options for On-going Support for NELAC") was identified on page 2. Dr. Brokopp then reviewed the action items as contained in the draft minutes of the April 20th meeting. All four action items were deemed "completed." A motion was heard and seconded that the minutes be approved as written, and the committee voted unanimously for approval.

Response from the Board of Directors on Options for the Future of NELAC, Including Formation of a Private, Non-Profit Organization

Dr. Brokopp then opened a discussion of three proposed options for the future of NELAC, previously presented to the NELAC Board of Directors (BoD). The options include: 1) forming NELAC into a non-profit organization with considerable U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) oversight; 2) NELAC operating as it currently operates, with EPA continuing in its oversight role and as funding resource; and 3) forming NELAC into a non-profit organization without EPA involvement. All three options will be among topics discussed by the board in an upcoming meeting with Dr. Norine Noonan of the EPA's Office of Research and Development, and others, including perhaps Dr. Mr. Henry Longest, selected EPA associate administrators, and/or staff of EPA's Office of Environmental Information of the EPA's Office of Research and Development. The committee agreed that the meeting between the NELAC Board and Dr. Noonan must be held prior to the Sixth NELAC Annual Meeting (NELAC VI) in late June. The committee discussed the merits of each option but agreed that there was no point in further developing any particular option prior to discussions with the EPA.

Dr. Wilson Hershey reported that the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) had discussed these options at its May 11, 2000 meeting, and is of the opinion that EPA must retain significant oversight involvement in NELAC lest NELAC lose the support of some states. A memorandum to Dr. James Pearson is currently being drafted by ELAB, in which ELAB states its support for option 2. It is their hope that their memorandum might be incorporated into the discussions

between the NELAC BoD and Dr. Noonan. It was agreed that transitioning from NELAC's current working relationship with EPA increases the risk of total withdrawal of EPA from the NELAC process.

Discussion then turned to the concept of proposing to EPA a phased-in transition from option 2 status to option 1 over an extended period of time (perhaps 3 to 5 years). This would lessen the impact of the transition in all affected parties. NELAC would identify the implications of this transition to EPA's Office of Environmental Information and offer EPA and offer a viable time frame for that full transition. A move to option 1 should include maximizing the defined role of the EPA. While committee members prefer option 2, they support option 1 as a potentially viable long-term goal. Key to any transition from option 2 to option 1 should be development of a time line for major structural and program changes.

It was proposed that the committee develop a white (concept) paper from information contained in the bulleted option outline. Ms. Deborah Loring and Ms. Batterton agreed to prepare introductory/background information, Dr. Kenneth Jackson agreed to develop a draft time line (changes to occur in each of the 5 years), and Dr. Brokopp agreed to develop a discussion of rationale for the proposed concept. June 2, 2000 was set as a goal for the first draft of the paper. Mr. Jerry Parr mentioned that ACIL is actively working on the "earmarking of funds" initiative and on other Congressional activities alternate solutions. He offered to summarize information contained in two Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars regarding collection of fees by federal agencies, and providing that summary to committee members.

Final Agenda for the Transition Committee Meeting at the NELAC VI Annual Meeting

The committee's agenda for the NELAC VI annual meeting currently includes:

1. committee introductions,
2. update on EPA support for NELAC,
3. fields of testing,
4. a report from the accrediting authority workgroup,
5. PT recommendations to the NELAC Board and accrediting authorities, and
6. committee membership.

Because item 3 will be discussed earlier in the conference, Mr. Parr will lead the discussion of that item on an as-needed basis. Dr. Jackson will lead the discussion of item 4, with particular attention to the availability of information on the group's activities and decisions.

It was recommended that an item be added to the agenda regarding the potential impact of the change in dates (July 1, 2000 to January 1, 2001) for first accreditation of accrediting authorities on states. A recommendation was also made that a representative from EPA be asked to attend the Transition Committee meeting to present information regarding the EPA's progress in becoming an accrediting authority.

Other Business

There being no additional discussion, the teleconference was concluded at 5:30 p.m. EDT.

**ACTION ITEMS
TRANSITION COMMITTEE MEETING
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Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1.	Dr. Brokopp will edit the draft minutes of the April 20, 2000 teleconference to reflect grammatical change.	
2.	Ms. Batterton, Ms. Loring, Dr. Jackson, and Dr. Brokopp will develop a draft white (concept) paper regarding transitioning from option 2 to option 1.	June 2, 2000
3.	Mr. Parr will summarize OMB circulars on fee collection by federal agencies and provide to committee members.	
4.	Dr. Brokopp will advise NELAC of changes to the proposed agenda for the Transition Committee meeting at NELAC VI annual meeting.	

**PARTICIPANTS
TRANSITION COMMITTEE MEETING
MAY 18, 2000**

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